

SOUTH CAROLINA.

REMONSTRANCE

OF THE

CITIZENS OF BEAUFORT DISTRICT, S. C.

AGAINST

ANY FURTHER INCREASE

OF THE

DUTIES ON IMPORTS.

DECEMBER 31, 1827.

Referred to the Committee on Manufactures.

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1828.

REMONSTRANCE.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States :

The citizens of Beaufort District, with the highest respect and attachment, claim the attention of the Representatives of the nation, to wrongs which we feel we are sustaining, and which are sought to be aggravated by successive tariffs on articles of consumption necessary to our wants, and indispensable to our comforts.

The power of Congress to regulate commerce is admitted by all, but we cannot concur in the opinion that this contemplates more than the collection of duties just sufficient for the indispensable support of Government. Taxation, direct or indirect, always odious, has arisen out of civilized society, and is submitted to by a people, only to avoid the greater evils of anarchy.

Wantonly to press the principle, leads to a corruption of Government, and the consequent impoverishment and wretchedness of the citizen.

Justice and economy we have always desired to believe are the great pillars of a Republic ; undermine these, the splendid edifice of self-government totters and falls to the ground.

We pray your honorable body to believe, that, in this application, we are not influenced by any extraneous feelings or sectional jealousies. Knowing, as we do, that all power emanates from, and actually remains with, the People, we have no fear but that the temporary errors, or wanton misrule, of their servants will be speedily corrected. It is the Government, and not the governors, that form the strongest link of our attachment ; recognizing, in its fullest extent, the patriotic sentiment of the great English admiral, acting under an usurper.

Neither do we admit that we feel towards other sections of the Union more than an honest rivalry, desiring, by our unrestrained industry, to add to the credit of our native State, and the general welfare of the nation.

In our widely extended surface, ample room is afforded to the good people of the United States to prosecute many vocations, without trenching on the rights of each other ; and we trust and hope, that your honorable body, constituted of members from all sections, and

so consecrated by your fellow citizens on account of your wisdom and integrity, will recognize a fact so evident. In the prosperity of all, all will be made happy. Let trade, as far as possible, regulate itself.

In the many intercourses of society, men will take care of themselves. The agriculturist will purchase from him who sells the cheapest, and best manufactures. The manufacturer will procure his own materials and bread stuffs, on the same principles. Commerce, growing out of the other two great classes, and indispensable to both, creates a hardy and valiant class of citizens, necessary to our high standing and pretensions among nations: commerce enlightens, strengthens, and matures a country, by bringing among a people the arts, population, and wisdom, of other countries. A commercial nation is, in fact, a nation of freemen, or has a strong tendency to become so. Despotism cowers under its magic influence. Looking to the South American States, we have seen a motley multitude of benighted beings converted into freemen, by bursting asunder the chains of a baneful monopoly, which interdicted intercourse with foreign nations. A restrictive system is not one natural to the United States of America, or, in our opinion, in any way called for by the exigency of the times. If a portion of our fellow-citizens feel it to their interest to leave the wholesome employment which nerved the limbs of their hardy ancestors to deeds of never-fading glory, and ply their hands to the distaff, let it be so: their genius, their industry, their capital, their many local advantages, and, above all, the freedom of our institutions, fully qualify them to enter into successful competition with any nation on earth, without recourse to Government for protection. The elements of their manufactures grow on their own shores, breathe on their own mountains, and are multiplied in their own meadows.

Already have we seen and felt such singular advantages, and witnessed with pleasure the progress of our country to independence and wealth. The immense and increasing call for domestic stuffs on our own shores, while foreign nations are receiving them with preference, sufficiently ensures to the capitalist and operator, a handsome profit on his investments. If there are exceptions, they must arise from the want of skill or experience in some branches, which a little more time will overcome.

We, of South Carolina, and particularly of our District, are still desirous of prosecuting the habits and vocations of our fathers, and retaining the privilege of purchasing our necessities where we can be best supplied. The present is an age characterised by liberal principles; and civilization, progressing with them, *pari passu*, is widely extending its march.

Nations have parted with their unprofitable chivalry and feudal usurpations, and are laudably engaged in studying the prosperity and happiness of their people. Industry and enterprise are pursued in

every clime, while kean-eyed diplomacy is indefatigable in procuring commercial advantages.

Let not the Government of these United States, by ill-timed measures, lose advantages which have raised our country to unrivalled eminence and prosperity, or weaken the strong attachment of any portion of the Union to our great Federal compact.

While we look to Government to repel all aggressions upon national rights, and to secure a just reciprocity from other Powers, we would forbear considering the late acts of some of the Governments, other than emanating from the necessity of their situation. Long and wasteful wars, with a host of sinecures necessary to sustain the aristocracy of their system, have involved them irremediably in debt, and driven their statesmen to exhaust their ingenuity in seeking subjects for taxation, from which their own people are not exempt; as we know that the colonists pay an enormous duty on the productions of their own soil.

These U. States, we are proud to say, are differently circumstanced. The citizen here is unshackled by a load of taxation; with an ever accumulating population to divide the national debt, and support the reasonable wants of an economical Government, the merchant prosecutes his enterprise, unrestricted, through every clime, with the best possible success; while, with fresh and abundant lands, the agriculturist and manufacturer furnish the materials of commerce. If these are facts, can oppressive tariffs be necessary for the protection of a people with such resources? We believe not. On the other hand, we are confident that articles we have to spare must and will, directly or indirectly, find a profitable market, unless hindered by our own acts; the colonial or other prohibitory restrictions to the contrary notwithstanding.

We beg leave to detail to your honorable body some facts of a local nature, and which we feel sufficient to strengthen our aversion to an increased tariff on woollen stuffs, prayed for by the manufacturers of this article, and which we perceive is to be brought before the approaching Congress.

South Carolina, always among the leading States of the Union in the value of her exports, has undergone several revolutions in her staple productions, the chief of which occurred toward the close of the last century, when some public spirited citizens introduced the cultivation of cotton as a substitute for indigo. Here we encountered all the difficulties incidental to a new and doubtful enterprise. A knowledge of the manner of cultivation, fitness of soil, and, finally, machinery for preparing the article for market, were desiderata only to be obtained by perseverance and much expense.

The Treasury of the State was opened to remunerate the individual whose felicitous genius invented a machine for detaching the green seed from its staple, and which finally has given so much prosperity to the States south of the Potomac, and millions to European labor; all of this without a call on the National Legislature for one cent, or

its interposition in any other way. In Beaufort District, where the long staple cotton is chiefly cultivated, we shall feel, in an aggravated degree, the oppressive operation of the system proposed; because, while we are taxed heavily on articles necessary for the comfortable clothing of our laborers, cotton bagging, &c., indispensable for the shipment of our staple, not one bale of fine cotton is manufactured on our own shores. The foreign capitalist, prohibited selling his merchandise, must buy sparingly, if at all, and ultimately be compelled to seek for the raw material elsewhere. It is in vain to tell us that the manufacturer must have our finest cottons; experience proves that mutual benefit is the life of trade. Already have we suffered a reduction of more than 200 per cent. in the value of the great object of our industry. Further depreciation must inevitably lead to ruin, or to a system of retrenchment, which will be felt by our sister States, to whom we have been profitable customers hitherto; buying of them, largely, all articles of domestic uses, contenting ourselves with the assiduous cultivation of the earth, and the improvement of the great staples of the State.

Curtail our income, you reduce the value of property, drive us from our favorite vocation, and compel us to call up those resources abundantly in our reach, but which we would decline, except in times of great necessity.

Persuaded that wise and prudent rulers must anxiously desire to be well acquainted with the feelings and opinions of those for whose benefit they legislate, as being well aware of the powerful influence exerted upon the laws by the character of those to whose regulation they are applied, your memorialists would esteem it highly criminal not to apprise your honorable body of the sentiments by which they are actuated, and the convictions which they entertain with respect to this system of protecting duties, and the power from which it derives its sanction, with that frankness and boldness which it befits the citizens of a Republic to use, when they would restrain, within the limits of their authority, those to whom they have entrusted the administration of their Government.

Being persuaded, also, that paper charters must soon lose their authority, unless carefully guarded by the vigilance and intelligence of the People; to preserve the sanctity and usefulness of the Constitution which they revere, they protest against this infringement of its provisions, as destructive of the security which it purports to afford to our rights, and as establishing a precedent for further and more dangerous usurpations.

Deeply impressed with these considerations, your memorialists, with the highest respect for your honorable body, would express their firm conviction, that the enactment of laws for creating a system of protecting duties, transcends the powers committed to you by the Constitution; and that all laws promulgated to create or sustain this system, are without just authority, and impose no moral obliga-

tion ; and it is submitted to the discretion of your honorable body, whether a wise policy would dictate a perseverance in a system which a large portion of the Union feel to be burdensome, and believe to be illegal. Your memorialists, therefore, earnestly entreat your honorable body to repeal all laws which have hitherto been passed for the protection of domestic manufactures, and, more especially, to refrain from such enactments in future. And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

RICHARD B. SCRIVEN, *Chairman.*

WM. F. COLCOCK, *Secretary.*

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